



Wednesday

MARCH 21, 2012 | A PUBLICATION OF *The Washington Post* | NEWS, ENTERTAINMENT, ARTS, LIFESTYLES | **FREE DAILY**



INSIDE JOKES

Jon Hamm has a future in comedy after his 'Mad Men' days **13**

NOT FIT FOR A PRESIDENT?

Eisenhower family members slam plans for a new memorial **9**



SHAKEN

A magnitude-7.4 earthquake levels 60 homes in Mexico **7**



FOR EXTENDED FORECAST, SEE PAGE 25

A Call for Justice

Phone records add to outrage as officials investigate whether a neighborhood watch captain should be charged for fatally shooting a teen in Florida **10**



CRAIG RUBADOULX/FLORIDA TODAY VIA AP/EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

Rally attendees join hands in prayer in Titusville, Fla., on Sunday during an event demanding justice for Trayvon Martin, a Florida teen killed by a neighborhood watch volunteer.

eo

eye openers

NEXT: RUNNING WITH BULLS

What Happens When You Outlive Your Bucket List

A 101-year-old who ushered in her birthday with a tandem paraglide ride last year will soar into the record books Tuesday. Great-great grandmother Mary Hardison, of Ogden, Utah, has been officially recognized as the "Oldest Female to Paraglide Tandem" by Guinness World Records. She has supplanted a 100-year-old woman from Cyprus who took her flight in 2007. (AP)

MEDICINE

Earth Diagnosed With Irritable Bowel Syndrome

A series of mysterious underground booms have been rattling Clintonville, Wisc., for at least two nights, baffling residents and local officials who have ruled out theories from earthquakes to water pressure problems. The noises — described as rumbles of thunder, sonic booms or fireworks — were reported this past Sunday and Monday. (AP)

WAYS TO GET OUT OF JURY DUTY

'I Can Spot Guilty People Just By Looking at Them. And I'm 9'

Like many people who get summoned to jury duty, Jacob Clark didn't want to go. But he has a legitimate excuse — he's 9. "I was like, 'What's a jury duty?'" Jacob said in response to his summons to appear in Orleans District Court in Massachusetts. Someone had typed 1982 for Jacob's birth year instead of 2002. (AP)

The Big Picture

ALBERTO SAIZ/AP



NOT QUITE BURNING MAN: Papier mache figures burn during the Fallas festival in Valencia, Spain, on Monday. Every year the city celebrates the ancient "Las Fallas" fiesta, a noisy week full of fireworks and processions in honor of Saint Joseph. Fallas climaxes in the burning of large papier mache figures. (AP)

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In Brief

FORT LEAVENWORTH, KAN.

Accused Afghan Shooter Owes \$1.5M in Fraud Case

Records for the alleged Afghan shooter show he owes \$1.5 million from an arbitration ruling nearly a decade ago that found him guilty of securities fraud. Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, 38, of Lake Tapps, Wash., has not been charged yet in the March 11 shooting spree. (AP)

LOS ANGELES

Online Date Sites Agree to Screen for Predators

Match.com, eHarmony and Spark Networks signed a statement agreeing to screen for sex offenders and take other safety steps after a woman was assaulted on a date, the California attorney general's office announced Tuesday. (AP)

CHICAGO

Study: Many Colon Tests Use Costly Sedation

Research out Wednesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association says too many are getting extra sedation treatment during their colonoscopy, costing as much as \$1 billion yearly. (AP)

Correction

In Tuesday's Fit section, the article "Let My People Run" incorrectly stated the number of plagues in Exodus. The Bible lists 10.

GOP Budget Calls for Deep Cuts

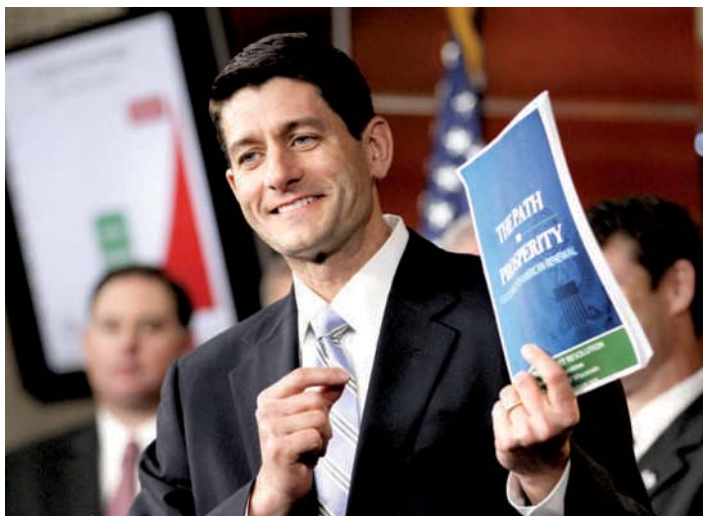
Republicans unveil blueprint looking to slim Medicare costs

Washington

Mixing deep cuts to safety-net programs for the poor with politically risky cost curbs for Medicare, Republicans controlling the House unveiled an election-year budget blueprint Tuesday that paints clear campaign differences with President Obama.

The announcement reignited a full-throated budget battle. Republicans cast themselves as stepping up to a federal deficit crisis long ignored by both parties, while Democrats and their allies responded with promises to protect the elderly and the poor from drastic cuts they said would harm the most vulnerable Americans.

The Republican proposal, released by House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan, would wrestle the federal spending deficit to a manageable size in short order, but only by cutting Medicaid, food stamps, Pell Grants and a



Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., holds up a copy of the Republican's new budget plan Tuesday. The blueprint calls for steep drops in personal and corporate tax rates.

The GOP plan doesn't have a chance of becoming law this year, but it provides a sharp contrast to the budget released by Obama.

host of other programs that Obama and other Democrats have promised to defend.

The plan calls for steep drops in personal and corporate tax rates in exchange for clearing away hundreds of tax deductions and preferences. It would eliminate oft-criticized corporate tax boondoggles but also tax deductions and credits claimed by the poor and middle class.

New Direction

Saving Medicare

To cope with the unsustainable growth of Medicare and the influx of retiring baby boomers, the GOP budget reprises a controversial approach that would switch the program from a traditional "fee for service" framework in which the government pays medical bills to a voucherlike "premium support" approach in which the government subsidizes purchases of health insurance. Republicans say it would force competition upon a wasteful health care system, lowering costs and giving seniors more options. (AP)

Democrats responded with a verbal fusillade. "House Republicans once again are trotting out their well-worn playbook to ensure that billionaires and Big Oil triumph over Grandma, Grandpa, the poor and the struggling middle class," said Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass. ANDREW TAYLOR (AP)



Even Less Free Press: A year after it began charging for full access to its website, The New York Times is cutting the number of articles available for free from 20 per month to 10. The Times says the change takes effect in April. The publisher offers three unlimited access plans, ranging in price from \$15 per month to \$35. Readers who follow email or social media links can still access individual articles for free even if they have reached their limit. (AP)



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Healthy adult volunteers needed

The National Institute of Mental Health is conducting outpatient research studies on fear and anxiety at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.

Over a period of one to three visits of one to three hours each, participants will be interviewed and possibly complete a series of tests during which your heart rate will be recorded.

Volunteers must be between 18-50 years of age, medically healthy, and not be taking medication. There is no cost for study-related tests. Compensation will be provided.

For more information, please call:
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National Institute of Mental Health
The NIH Clinical Center, America's research hospital, is located on the Metro red line in Bethesda, Maryland.

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Nation

Getting (More) Personal

Some employers ask jobs applicants for Facebook password

Seattle

When Justin Bassett interviewed for a new job, he expected the usual questions about experience and references. So he was astonished when the interviewer asked for something else: his Facebook username and password.

Bassett, a New York City statistician, had just finished answering a few character questions when the interviewer turned to her computer to search for his Facebook page. But she couldn't see his private profile. She turned back and asked him for his login information.

Bassett refused and withdrew his application. But as the job market steadily improves, other job candidates are confronting the same

Requirement or Rude?

Since the rise of social networking, it has become common for managers to review publicly available Facebook profiles, Twitter accounts and other sites to learn more about job candidates. But many users, especially on Facebook, have their profiles set to private, making them available only to selected people or certain networks. Companies that don't ask for passwords have taken other steps — such as asking applicants to friend human resource managers or to log in to a company computer during an interview. Once employed, some workers have been required to sign non-disparagement agreements that ban them from talking negatively about an employer on social media. (AP)

question from prospective employers, and some of them cannot afford to say no.

In their efforts to vet applicants, some companies and government agencies are asking to log in as the user to have a look around.

"It's akin to requiring someone's house keys," said Orin Kerr, a George Washington University law professor who calls it "an egregious privacy violation."

Questions have been raised about

the legality of the practice, which is also the focus of proposed legislation in Illinois and Maryland that would forbid public agencies from asking for access to social networks.

Facebook declined to comment except for issuing a brief statement declaring that the site forbids "anyone from soliciting the login information or accessing an account belonging to someone else." MANUEL VALDES AND SHANNON MCFARLAND (AP)

Survey Shows Open Adoptions Are Increasing

New York

The secrecy that long shrouded adoption has given way to openness, and only about 5 percent of infant adoptions in the U.S. now take place without some ongoing relationship between birth parent and adoptive family, according to a new report.

The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute report said Wednesday that of the roughly 14,000 to 18,000 infant adoptions each year, about 55 percent are fully open, with the parties agreeing to ongoing contact that includes the child, the report said. (AP)

Tornado Damages Homes in Texas



WILLIAM LUTHER/AP

PEOPLE SEARCH FOR BELONGINGS at the site of a destroyed home Tuesday near Devine, Texas. A tornado touched down Monday night, damaging 20 homes, according to the National Weather Service. The damage trapped some people inside their mobile homes, but no fatalities were reported.

1 The number of Wyoming delegates Mitt Romney took from Rick Santorum, State GOP Chairwoman Tammy Hooper said Tuesday. The Park County Republican Executive Committee voted Monday night to change the results, saying one of its votes was held improperly. (AP)

DC Rider

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Top Commander: Afghan Mission on Track

Washington

Facing a skeptical Congress, the top commander in Afghanistan insisted on Tuesday that the United States is winding down the decade-plus war and has no intention to remain in the country indefinitely.

"There is no part of our strategy that intends to stay in Afghanistan forever," Marine Gen. John Allen told the House Armed Services Committee. It was his first congressional appearance since a

U.S. soldier's alleged massacre of Afghan civilians and the burning of Qurans by American forces dealt severe setbacks to the fragile U.S.-Afghanistan relationship.

In his appearance before the House Armed Services Committee, Allen parried questions from war-weary lawmakers who questioned whether the United States should accelerate the timetable for withdrawing some of the 90,000 combat forces still in the country, and whether a projected Afghan force of

Troop Drawdown

The current U.S. plan for Afghanistan calls for a drawdown of 23,000 American troops by the end of September and a complete withdrawal by December 2014, when Afghan forces are to take charge of the country's security. As of Tuesday, at least 1,784 members of the U.S. military had died in Afghanistan as a result of the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001. (AP)

352,000 would be capable of ensuring the country's security.

Allen gave no hint of a speedier drawdown in the face of increasing political and public pressure to end the mission. Opinion polls show a growing number of Americans say the U.S. should bring home the 90,000 troops now. Afghan President Hamid Karzai said last week he was at "the end of the rope" over civilian deaths, and demanded that U.S. troops leave local villages. DONNA CASSATA (AP)

Hearsay

"I think he has not done as well as we had hoped. None of us ever do in campaigns."



— SEN. JOHN MCCAIN, IN AN INTERVIEW TUESDAY WITH DON IMUS, ON MITT ROMNEY'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.

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World

French Police Hunt for School Shooter

Authorities suspect expert gunman has grudges, neo-Nazi ties

Toulouse, France

Police searched southern France on Tuesday for an expert gunman suspected of fatally shooting seven people in the head at close range in attacks that may have been motivated by neo-Nazi ties or grudges against minorities.

The shooter is suspected of car-

rying out three deadly attacks: leaving four people dead on Monday at a Jewish school in Toulouse, three of them young children; killing two French paratroopers and seriously wounding another last Thursday in nearby Montauban; and fatally shooting another paratrooper in Toulouse on March 11.

All the victims in the school attack were Jewish with dual French-Israeli citizenship, and the paratroopers were of North African or French Caribbean origin. The shots were fired at such close

range that the gunfire burned the skin, prosecutor Francois Molins said Tuesday.

"We are confronted with an individual extremely determined in his actions, an armed individual who acts always with the same modus operandi," he said, "in cold blood ... with premeditated actions."

He added the crimes appear to be premeditated due to the killer's "choices of victims and the choices of his targets" — the army, the foreign origin of the victims or their religion.



A child leans on a hearse Tuesday after a funeral ceremony at the Ozar Hatorah Jewish school in Toulouse, France.

The killer could "act again," he said.

Interior Minister Claude Gueant described the suspect as "someone very cold, very determined, very much a master of his movements, and by consequence, very cruel."

On Tuesday night, the school attack victims were being flown to Israel for burial there, accompanied by French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe. A funeral service is being held Wednesday in Montauban for the paratroopers. JAMEY

KEATEN AND JOHANNA DECORSE (AP)

Blasts Kill 46 as Key Summit Nears in Iraq

Baghdad

Insurgents plotting to derail next week's Arab League meeting in Baghdad unleashed bloody attacks across Iraq on Tuesday, killing 46 people.

The government vowed not to be scared off from hosting the summit — the first in the country in a generation and a chance to prove it is moving toward normalcy after years of war.

Bombs struck Shiite pilgrims in the holy city of Karbala, set cars on fire in Kirkuk and targeted security forces and government officials in Baghdad and surrounding cities. Iraqis out shopping or eating at restaurants on the bright, spring day fell victim to the onslaught: More than 200 people were wounded in fewer than six hours.

Thirteen people, most of them police officers, were killed and 59 injured in that attack alone, said Brig. Gen. Sarhad Qadir.

"It was a scene from hell, where there is only a huge fire and dead people and nothing else," Majid said.



A man inspects his destroyed vehicle Tuesday at the scene of a car bomb attack in Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad.

Prior Warning

Tuesday's attacks in Iraq were not entirely unexpected: Government and security officials have warned for weeks that al-Qaeda and Sunni sympathizers would try to thwart the Arab League summit by sowing fear about Baghdad's stability. Plans for the capital to host the meeting last year were postponed, in part because of concerns about security. The Iraqi wing of al-Qaeda said it was behind one of the day's bombing, outside the Foreign Ministry. (AP)

The Shiite-led government staunchly stood by its \$400 million plans to host the summit, which leaders have called a crucial step for Iraq to showcase its improved stability following the sectarian fighting a few years ago that almost pulled the country into civil war. LARA JAKES (AP)

In Brief

WASHINGTON

U.S. Exempts 11 Nations From Iran Oil Sanctions

The Obama administration on Tuesday exempted 10 European Union countries and Japan from U.S. economic sanctions because they have significantly reduced their purchases of petroleum from Iran. (AP)

LONDON

Princess Diana's Home To Reopen to Public

It's the past home of Queen Victoria and Princess Diana, the future residence of Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge — and, it's hoped, a stop on tourists' London itineraries. Kensington Palace — part museum, part royal abode — is reopening to the public after a two-year, \$19-million makeover. (AP)

TUNIS, TUNISIA

Tunisians Call for Civil State on National Day

Thousands of Tunisians marched through the center of the capital Tuesday calling for a civil state on the 56th anniversary of the country's independence from France. The march in Tunis was the latest move in the ongoing battle between Islamists and secularists after a popular uprising overthrew dictator President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali a year earlier. (AP)

Real Genius: It was, it wasn't, it is: A still life once thought to be by Vincent van Gogh but later downgraded to being the work of an anonymous artist is indeed by the tormented Dutch impressionist himself, researchers announced Tuesday. A new X-ray technique helped experts re-examine what they already knew about "Still life with meadow flowers and roses" and draw on a growing pool of scholarly Van Gogh research to make the conclusion. (AP)





A woman comforts her children outside a school after a magnitude-7.4 earthquake struck in Mexico City on Tuesday.

Quake Rattles Mexico

No reports of deaths after magnitude-7.4 temblor jolts country

Mexico City

A magnitude-7.4 earthquake hit central and southern Mexico on Tuesday, damaging some 800 homes near the epicenter and swaying tall buildings and spreading fear and panic hundreds of miles away in the capital of Mexico City.

One of the strongest to shake Mexico since the deadly 1985 temblor that killed thousands in Mexico City, Tuesday's earthquake hit hardest in border area of southern Oaxaca and Guerrero states,

Other Major Quakes

Some of the strongest temblors recorded in the world:

- **Nov. 1755:** A magnitude-8.7 quake and ensuing tsunami in Lisbon, Portugal, killed an estimated 60,000 people and destroyed much of Lisbon.
- **Aug. 1868:** A magnitude-9.0 quake in Arica, Peru (now Chile) generated catastrophic tsunamis; more than 25,000 people were killed.
- **Dec. 2004:** An Indian Ocean tsunami, triggered by a magnitude-9.0 earthquake, killed 230,000 in a dozen countries.
- **March 2011:** A magnitude-8.9 quake struck off the coast of Japan, sending a tsunami across the Pacific. The final death toll isn't known. (AP)

where Guerrero official confirmed that some 800 homes had been damaged, with another 60 having collapsed.

Hours after the shaking at noon local time, there were still no reports of death or serious injury, even after a less powerful, magnitude-5.1 aftershock was felt in the capital and several other aftershocks near the epicenter in a mountainous rural region.

"It was very strong, very substantial," said Campos Benitez, hospital director in Ometepec, about 15 miles from the epicenter.

President Obama's oldest daughter, Malia, was reported safe while on vacation with a school group in Oaxaca. KATHERINE CORCORAN (AP)

Russia Signals Support for New U.N. Syria Plan

Moscow

Russia said Tuesday it's ready to support a United Nations resolution endorsing Kofi Annan's plan for settling the Syrian crisis, signaling it is prepared to raise the pressure on its old ally.

Russian Foreign Minister

Sergey Lavrov warned that the resolution shouldn't turn into an ultimatum to the Syrian government, setting the stage for tough bargaining over the wording of the document at the U.N. Security Council.

But Lavrov appeared to indicate Russia's growing impatience with

Syrian President Bashar Assad, whose government he said made "many mistakes" that led to a worsening of the conflict.

Russia and China have twice shielded Assad's regime from U.N. sanctions over its yearlong crackdown on protesters, in which more than 8,000 people have died. (AP)

Hearsay

"We are no longer afraid of anything. We even have a banner."



— **FRANK MUGISHA**, UGANDAN ACTIVIST, WHO WAS JOINED BY 30 PEOPLE IN A GAY RIGHTS MARCH. HIS FIRST PROTEST, FOUR YEARS AGO, DREW FOUR PEOPLE.



LAWS

Model Legislation

A new Israeli law, believed to be the first of its kind in the world, bans the display of overly thin models in local advertisements in an attempt to fight eating disorders. It also requires publications to disclose when they alter images to make models appear thinner than they really are. (AP)

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Metro Credit Card Abuses Cited

Report finds almost \$10K in questionable purchases by staffers

Washington

Employees in the planning department at Metro have used agency credit cards to buy camcorders, gift cards, Kindle e-readers and even a set of designer earbuds, according to an investigation by the transit authority's inspector general last year that found extensive abuse.

The abuse was so pervasive, according to the report, that authorities decided prosecution would be futile.

On the Riders' Dime

Among the questionable expenditures uncovered in an investigation by Metro's inspector general were the following:



Metro released the 13-page document late Monday in response to a Washington Post request for a report into misuse of credit cards in the planning department.

The inspector general's report calls into question purchases worth almost \$10,000. There was "an attempt to cover up these unauthorized purchases with descriptions of legitimate" ones, the report said.

In one situation, a purchase card record shows that \$2,795 was spent on items to give out at a luncheon, including 49 gift cards, gift baskets, six boxes of chocolates, two digital cameras, a Kindle e-reader and a digital photo album, the report said. Another purchase

"We are simply not going to be able to prove this case. ... They all have something to hide so credibility is a real issue."

— THE U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR THE DISTRICT TO METRO'S INSPECTOR GENERAL, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT.

card record shows \$427.80 spent at Safeway for "event supplies" for the lunch, which about 30 people attended.

Metro said it is "conducting training and instruction, as well as establishing further controls that will improve compliance with purchase card policies."

(THE WASHINGTON POST)

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In Brief

ARLINGTON

Police Chief Rescinds Memo for Tickets Quotas

Arlington County's police chief has rescinded a memo that seemed to suggest patrol officers had numerical monthly quotas for issuing arrests and traffic and parking violations. Tuesday, Chief M. Douglas Scott called the March 1 memo, titled "Proactivity Expectations 2012," a mistake and said he did not want any appearance that his officers were following quotas. The memo suggested that officers could face discipline if they did not meet minimum standards. (AP)

ROCKVILLE, MD.

Md. Firm Chosen to Help Groups Save on Power

A Maryland company has been chosen by more than 100 religious, community, labor and low-income housing groups in the Washington area joining forces to save money on electricity. The groups met Tuesday and announced that they had selected Rockville-based Clean Currents, which had also won the previous contract. The purchase was organized by Groundswell, a Washington-based nonprofit. Groundswell says the effort started last year with 11 institutions that cut power bills by 15 percent. (AP)

WASHINGTON

Lawyers: Photos Useless In 2002 IMF Protest Suit

Lawyers for the District of Columbia say photographs taken inside a police command center aren't relevant to a lawsuit challenging mass arrests during a 2002 protest in the city. At issue are photographs of police command center monitors that were taken during the weekend meetings of the International Monetary Fund-World Bank. But lawyers for the government say in court papers that the monitors don't show Pershing Park and weren't taken the day of the arrests. (AP)

Eisenhower Design Plan Panned

Family likens Gehry memorial proposal to Hitler's death camps

Washington

Susan Eisenhower appeared before a Congressional committee hearing today to denounce designs by architect Frank Gehry for a memorial honoring her grandfather, the 34th president of the United States.

She compared Gehry's proposals for large metal tapestries that depict Dwight D. Eisenhower's boyhood home of Abilene, Kan. to Communist-era decoration that

honored "Marx, Engels and Lenin." She likened large columns that will be used to hang the metal scrims to "missile silos," mentioned Ho Chi Min and Mao, and argued that Holocaust survivors were affronted by the similarity of the tapestries to the fences of Adolf Hitler's death camps.

Representing the Eisenhower family, she called on the Eisenhower Memorial Commission, which has overseen the process of planning and designing a memorial since authorized by Congress in 1999, to go back and start over.

"We now believe that a redesign is the only way to make this



An artist's rendering shows pedestrians in front of the Eisenhower Memorial.

memorial acceptable to the American people," she said, of the proposed monument that will sit at the intersection of Maryland and

Independence avenues just south of the national mall.

Members of the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands listened to complaints from the Eisenhower family, and from independent advocates of traditional architecture. It's not clear if Congress will reopen the process.

If the family "concludes that the sculpture of young Eisenhower is an inappropriate way to honor him, then I will be open to exploring other options with them," Gehry wrote in a letter introduced as testimony. PHILIP KENNICOTT (THE WASHINGTON POST)

Md. Soldier Killed in Afghanistan Laid to Rest

FAMILY MEMBERS, OFFICIALS AND MOURNERS follow the caisson carrying the flag-draped coffin of Maj. Robert J. Marchanti II, killed last month in Afghanistan, at Arlington National Cemetery. Marchanti, 48, taught physical education in Baltimore County schools before joining the Maryland Army National Guard full time in 2008. | [postlocal.com](#)

D.C. Council Halts 'Red-Top' Parking Meters

Washington

The D.C. Council has temporarily halted major changes to the way disabled drivers park in the city. The council approved emergency legislation Tuesday that suspends enforcement of the district's new "red-top" parking meter program for 90 days.

Currently, drivers with disabled tags or temporary disabled permits can park for free at meters for double the posted time period. But the "red-top" meter program would reserve 1,500 meters for people with disabilities and require them to pay or face \$250 fines.

Councilmember Muriel Bowser says the city is placing an undue burden on disabled drivers without their input. (AP)

The Lotteries**Tuesday, March 20****Maryland**

Mid-day Pick 3 9-1-2
Evening Pick 3 (Mon.) 9-9-6
Mid-day Pick 4 6-4-7-5
Evening Pick 4 (Mon.) 4-6-0-4
Match 5 (Mon.) 8-10-28-35-36 (39)

District

Mid-day Lucky Numbers 2-5-7
Evening Lucky Numbers (Mon.) 9-6-5
Mid-day DC 4 0-0-4-0
Evening DC 4 (Mon.) 5-0-9-1
Mid-day D.C. Five 0-8-1-5-7
Evening D.C. Five (Mon.) 3-3-1-9-1

Virginia

Mid-day Pick 3 0-7-7
Evening Pick 3 (Mon.) 2-7-7
Mid-day Pick 4 0-1-5-5
Evening Pick 4 (Mon.) 1-1-3-8
Mid-day Cash 5 (Tues.) 1-12-15-24-28
Evening Cash 5 (Mon.) 4-16-17-29-34

All winning numbers are official only when validated at a claims location. Drawings that occur after Express' deadline will be published two days later.

Cover Story



Jashua Casto pays respects Tuesday at a memorial to Trayvon Martin outside The Retreat at Twin Lakes community in Sanford, Fla., where Trayvon was shot by George Michael Zimmerman while Zimmerman was on a neighborhood watch patrol.

Backstory



Trayvon Martin

called his 16-year-old girlfriend in Miami several times on Feb. 26, including just before he was killed, attorney Benjamin Crump said Tuesday. The discovery of the lengthy conversations, including one moments before the shooting, was made over the weekend by Martin's father, who checked his son's cell phone log, Crump said.

Martin told the girl he'd taken shelter from the rain briefly at an apartment building in the gated community where his father lives, Crump said. Martin then said was being followed and would try to lose the person, Crump said.

After Martin encountered George Zimmerman, the girl thinks she heard a scuffle "because his voice changes like something interrupted his speech," Crump said. The last call was at 7:12 p.m. Police arrived at 7:17 p.m. to find Martin lying facedown on the ground. (AP)

before he shot Martin.

Zimmerman was handcuffed after police arrived and taken into custody for questioning, but was released by police without being charged. Crump called the treatment unfair and asked if Martin would have received the same treatment if he had been the shooter. "We will not rest until he is arrested," Crump said.

Crump said he plans to turn over information about the phone call to federal investigators; a grand jury in Seminole County is also likely to subpoena the records. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement is also involved in the state case.

Former federal prosecutors said there are limitations to a Justice Department civil rights probe, which typically would involve a sworn law enforcement officer accused of abusing his authority. In this case, they said, it's not clear whether Zimmerman had any actual law enforcement authority or if the Sanford Police Department did anything improper.

"I think the community has the feeling that there's some type of cover-up," said Jeffrey Sloman, former U.S. attorney in Miami. "This is going to be a tough case to prosecute." (AP)

Fla. Killing Probed

U.S. officials will investigate whether black teenager was shot in self-defense

Sanford, Fla.

An unarmed black teenager shot to death by a neighborhood watch captain told his girlfriend he was being followed shortly before the confrontation that killed him, a lawyer said Tuesday as federal and state prosecutors announced they would investigate.

"Oh he's right behind me, he's right behind me again," 17-year-old Trayvon Martin told his girlfriend on the phone, said Benjamin Crump, the Martin family's attorney.

The girl later heard Martin say, "Why are you following me?" Another man asked, "What are you doing

around here?" Crump said.

The phone call that recorded Martin's final moments was disclosed as the U.S. Justice Department opened a federal civil rights probe into the Feb. 26 shooting and the local prosecutor convened a grand jury to investigate.



Zimmerman

The neighborhood watch captain, George Zimmerman, has not been charged and has said he shot Martin — who was returning to a gated community in Sanford after buying candy at a convenience store —

500K

The number of signatures a Change.org petition urging local authorities to prosecute George Zimmerman had drawn as of Tuesday afternoon. About 50 attorneys and protesters filled the lobby in the governor's office Tuesday to deliver a letter seeking an independent investigation and a task force to study racial profiling. (AP)

in self-defense after Martin attacked him. Police say Zimmerman is white; his family says he is Hispanic.

Crump says Zimmerman's story doesn't hold up, in light of the calls Martin's girlfriend received. "She absolutely blows Zimmerman's absurd self-defense claim out of the water," he said.

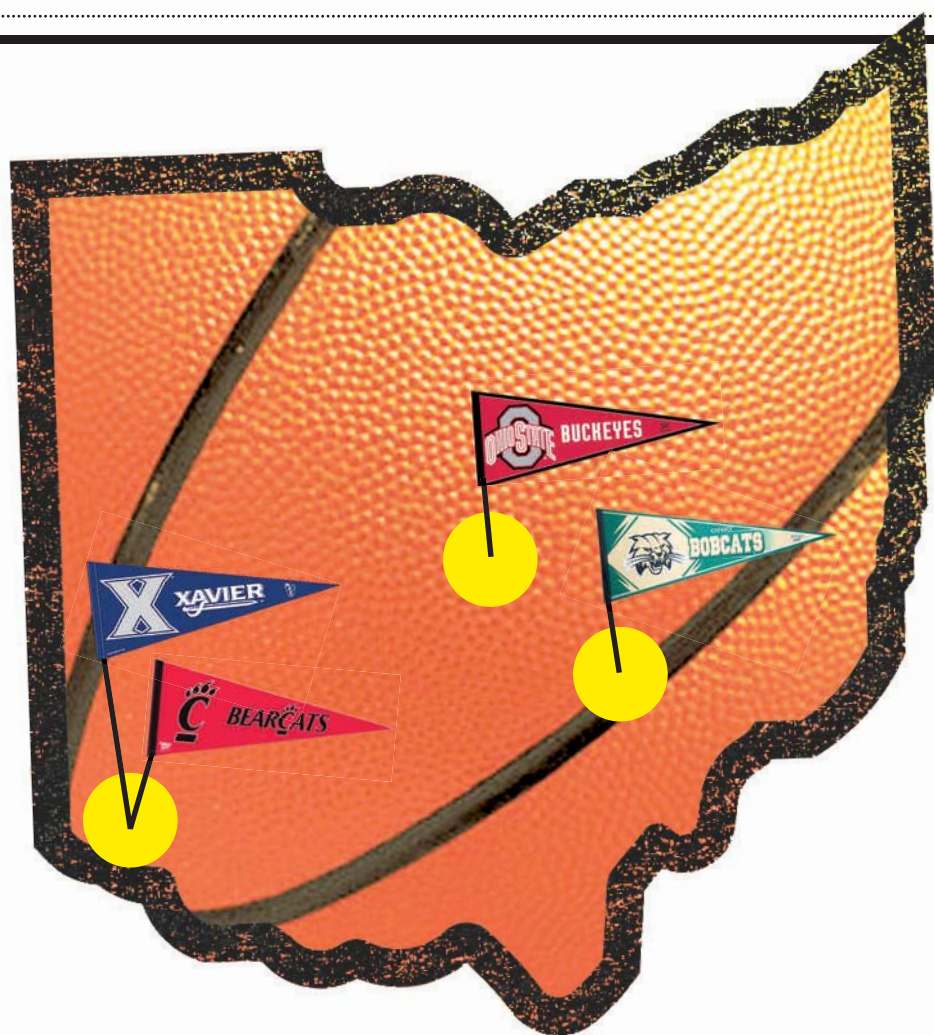
The case has ignited racial tensions in this Orlando suburb of 53,500 people, sparking rallies and a protest in Gov. Rick Scott's office on Tuesday.

Police say Zimmerman was bleeding from his nose and the back of his head the night of the shooting, and told police he had yelled for help

"I will make sure justice prevails. They're not going to let somebody do something wrong and get away with it."

— FLORIDA GOV. RICK SCOTT, ON LOCAL LAW OFFICIALS WHO HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER TO CHARGE GEORGE ZIMMERMAN IN THE DEATH OF 17-YEAR-OLD TRAYVON MARTIN.





State of Play

Ohio is abuzz after sending a record four teams to the Sweet 16

Men's College Hoops

Stirred by a pep talk from the school president, the Ohio Bobcats applauded themselves in the locker room and celebrated their trip to the NCAA Tournament's round of 16 by chanting: "We are Ohio!"

Not a bad March motto for the whole state.

The nation's 17th state is the first to send four teams to the NCAA's round of 16 — the Bobcats, Ohio State, the University of Cincinnati and Xavier. The four come from different conferences and play different styles, but have gone a com-

"You hear of Tobacco Road, but this region is as powerful and basketball-committed as any in the country. It's there for everybody to see at this point based on how the tournament has played out."

— XAVIER ATHLETIC DIRECTOR MIKE BOBINSKI, WHO IS ON THE NCAA TOURNAMENT SELECTION COMMITTEE, BASKING IN THE STRONG SHOWING BY OHIO TEAMS.

bined 8-0 in the tournament.

Beware the Buckeyes — all of them.

"It's super for Ohio basketball," former Ohio State star Jerry Lucas said on Monday. "It's always been good, and will always be good. This whole region has traditionally had great basketball. To see Ohio be the first to have four in the Sweet 16 — that's great."

Seven other states have managed to get three teams into the round of 16, according to STATS LLC: Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Texas, California, North Carolina, Kansas and Tennessee. Ohio has topped them all.

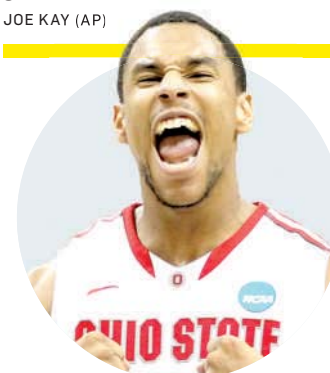
No state has ever had a better opening week in the tournament. The First Four games were played in Dayton, where President Barack

Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron watched Western Kentucky pull off an historic comeback in the opener.

Just as Ohio provided a memorable start to the tournament, it'll get the second weekend going in a fitting way. Ohio State plays Cincinnati Thursday, a rematch on the 50th anniversary of the Bearcats defeat of the Buckeyes in the national championship game for the second year in a row.

"I have great respect for their program," Cincinnati coach Mick Cronin said of Ohio State. "Other than that, they're the next team we play. You know, these guys have a goal. We have a goal: We get in the tournament to win it."

JOE KAY (AP)



A Fearsome Foursome

► Ohio State — the Big Ten school whose band spells "Ohio" in script at halftime of football games — lived up to its No. 2 seed by beating Loyola, Md., and Gonzaga.

► Ohio University — the Mid-American Conference representative whose band dances to the "Party Rock Anthem" at halftime — got a 13th seed and became the tournament's latest mid-major darling, beating Michigan and South Florida to get to the round of 16 for the first time since 1964.

► The Big East's Cincinnati Bearcats knocked off Texas and Florida State to reach the round of 16 for the first time since 2001 under coach Bob Huggins.

► No. 10 seed Xavier, the only Atlantic 10 team left, beat Notre Dame and Lehigh to reach the regional semifinals for the fourth time in five years.

Swengali

Guessing Game Makes March Fun

One of my co-workers is on a well-publicized strike against NCAA Tournament pools.

He says he's enjoying the games more without having to worry about teams he picked in a paper bracket. If that's true, good for him.



By Matt Swenson

But for me, just seeing how wrong I am each March is half the fun of the tournament. It's a good exercise in humility.

As anyone who read my bracket analysis last week in Express knows, my picks haven't exactly worked out.

True, three of my Final Four teams — Kentucky, Kansas and Marquette — are still alive. But my predictions for upsets didn't pan out, as Ohio took

That's right, I'm losing to a girl! And you know what? I'm totally fine with that.

down Michigan — and with it, my pick to knock off North Carolina.

How bad am I doing? My wife has picked more winners correctly than me.

That's right, I'm losing to a girl! And you know what? I'm totally fine with that.

First off, I'm used to my wife being right — in most things, anyway.

But more important, I love that March Madness is so random that someone who saw two games this year — George Mason-Old Dominion and Georgetown-Villanova — can guess better than me, someone who gets paid to watch sports for a living.

So those who say Swengali is always wrong — you have a strong case. Just don't go arguing it against my wife.



To reach Matt Swenson, e-mail matt.swenson@readexpress.com

Sports

Mile-High Expectations in Denver

Facing Super Bowl pressure, Manning joins the Broncos

Pro Football

Peyton Manning stood next to John Elway, holding up a bright orange jersey with the No. 18 on it. Yes, that could take some getting used to.

And now if Manning's surgically repaired neck cooperates, these two quarterbacks — one in the Hall of Fame, the other headed there one day — think they might be taking a similar photo together, only next time they'll be holding a Super Bowl trophy.

Manning was introduced as the new quarterback of the Denver Broncos on Tuesday, the four-time MVP taking the spot once held by Elway, who as Broncos vice president engineered the deal to bring the NFL's most sought-after free agent to town.

It's a deal that could also mark the end of Tim Tebow's days in Denver — a bold move, for sure, but one Elway was more than willing to take. "Plan B?" he said. "We're going with Plan A."

After his photo op with Elway



Peyton Manning, flanked by Broncos owner Pat Bowlen and team vice president John Elway, holds his new jersey during his introduction in Denver on Tuesday.

"If Tim Tebow is here, I'm going to be the best teammate."

— PEYTON MANNING, ADDRESSING THE UNLIKELY SCENARIO IN WHICH TIM TEBOW WILL REMAIN WITH THE BRONCOS AFTER MANNING SIGNED A \$95 MILLION DEAL TO START OVER THE FAN FAVORITE. TEBOW IS EXPECTED TO BE TRADED SOON.

and owner Pat Bowlen, Manning answered many of the questions that have been bouncing around since March 7, when his old team, the Indianapolis Colts, released the quarterback and set in motion one of the most frenetic free-agent pursuits in history.

On the neck injury that kept him off the field through 2011: "I'm not where I want to be. I want to be

Shades of Elway?

Peyton Manning, who turns 36 on Saturday, said he made a quick connection with John Elway, who won his two Super Bowls in Denver after his 37th birthday. Since No. 7's retirement, a long string of quarterbacks have come to Denver, trying in vain to replace the unreplaceable. If anyone can get out of that shadow, Manning could be the man. He's got two trips to the Super Bowl (and one title) and 11 Pro Bowls, and he was the fastest player to reach 50,000 yards and 4,000 completions. (AP)

where I was before I was injured. There's a lot of work to do to get where we want to be from a health standpoint."

And so, the deal was sealed. Manning has a five-year, \$96 million contract and plans to retire in Denver. The Broncos, meanwhile, have some protection in the way the contract was formulated. There's no signing bonus. Manning will get \$18 million guaranteed for next season, but must pass a physical before each season, starting in 2013, to get paid.

"I don't consider it much of a risk, knowing Peyton Manning," Elway said. EDDIE PELLIS (AP)

In Brief



Hines Ward chose to retire rather than play for a team other than the Steelers.

PRO FOOTBALL

Ward Calls It a Career

Hines Ward believes he can still play football. The longtime Pittsburgh wide receiver just couldn't stomach the thought of doing it in some strange uniform on some strange field with nary a Terrible Towel in sight. So rather than play for a 15th season — and his first outside the Steel City — a tearful Ward opted to retire on Tuesday and secure a legacy unmatched in the franchise's long history. (AP)

THE REDSKINS

Linemen Ink Contracts

Offensive lineman Kory Lichtensteiger has signed his one-year, \$1.26 million restricted free agent tender to remain with the Redskins. The Redskins also announced Tuesday that defensive end Adam Carriker has signed his new deal. Carriker last week agreed to a four-year, \$20 million contract with \$7 million guaranteed. (AP)

PRO BASEBALL

Tigers' Cabrera Out Until Regular Season Opens

Detroit Tigers third baseman Miguel Cabrera has a broken bone below his right eye after being struck by a bad-hop grounder, sidelining the star slugger for at least a week with opening day on deck. The AL Central champions start April 5 at home against Boston, giving Cabrera less than 2½ weeks to recover. (AP)

TV Lineup

WIZARDS (7:30 P.M., CSN) Nene is set to make his Wizards debut against the New Jersey Nets.

PRO BASKETBALL (7 P.M., 9:30 P.M., ESPN) The New York Knicks visit the Philadelphia 76ers and the Dallas Mavericks host the Los Angeles Lakers.

PRO HOCKEY (7:30 P.M., NBCSN) The New York Rangers face off against the Detroit Red Wings.

BASEBALL (1 P.M., ESPN) The New York Yankees and Tampa Bay Rays meet in an exhibition game.

NIT HOOPS (7 P.M., 9 P.M., ESPN) Middle Tennessee plays Minnesota and Nevada faces Stanford in the NIT.

UNC Preparing to Play Without Injured Point Guard

Men's College Hoops

North Carolina is preparing to play without injured point guard Kendall Marshall.

The Tar Heels just haven't figured out how yet.

Coach Roy Williams said Tuesday that his team's "preparation is 100 percent" to go without Marshall after the pass-first guard had surgery to repair his broken

washingtonpost.com

Georgetown's second-round game in the women's NCAA Tournament ended after Express' deadline. For results | washingtonpost.com/sports

right wrist.

Marshall's status remains unclear for the Midwest Regional semifinal Friday night in St. Louis, the coach said.

"You've got me between a rock and a hard place," Williams said. "I cannot give you any answers. I've given everybody all the answers I can give because I've said honestly, I do not know."

The left-handed sophomore broke his wrist on a drive in the second half of a win against Creighton on Sunday night in the Tar Heels' second NCAA tournament game. (AP)



Grizzlies' Man: The Memphis Grizzlies on Tuesday signed Gilbert Arenas for the remainder of the season, filling a need at point guard. The oft-injured free agent had not played since finishing last season with the Orlando Magic. The 30-year-old Arenas, a former star with the Wizards, has averaged 21.2 points and 5.4 assists per game in his nine-year career, but is no longer an elite player due to knee injuries. (AP)

lookout



Hollywood Hotline
If you have a phone, you can talk to a minor celebrity — for a fee **27**

Inside Jokes



MICHAEL BUCKNER/GETTY IMAGES

Hamming It Up

While I'm as excited as anyone for the return of "Mad Men" Sunday on AMC, I'm not sure I'm ready for Jon Hamm to start playing serious again. In the nearly 18 months that "Mad Men" has been off the air, Hamm has eschewed dramatic roles in favor of his lesser-known talent: comedy.



By Rudi Greenberg

Sure, Don Draper gets in his fair share of snarky one-liners, but outside of "Mad Men," Hamm has proven he can hang with heavyweights like Tina Fey, David Cross and Kristen Wiig. Hamm does bumbling and goofy especially well, whether he's playing Liz Lemon's ex-boyfriend with hooks for hands on "30 Rock," or doing the robot on IFC's "The Increasingly Poor Decisions of Todd Margaret."

"My approach to comedy has basically been to stand next to really funny people and try to keep a straight face," he says in April's Playboy. The truth is, Hamm has had years to study the form. In the '90s, he spent his nights hanging out in alternative comedy rooms, forming friendships with such comics as Sarah Silverman, Patton Oswalt and Zach Galifianakis.

Whenever "Mad Men" ends its run, it will be exciting to see what route Hamm takes. Here's hoping it's funny.



For more of Rudi's thoughts, follow him on Twitter: @rudi_greenberg.



Making Boring Brilliant

The Shins continue to excel at a familiar brand of guitar pop

Album Review

The Shins made boring music cool. The band was on the cutting edge of not being cutting edge. It isn't exactly the proudest legacy, but it's a surprisingly influential one. A decade ago they were the original NPRockers, playing a familiar and effective brand of literate guitar pop. A namedrop by Natalie Portman's "Garden State" character helped provide a foundation for the 21st-century definition of hipster.

The band's 2007 album, "Winc-

ing the Night Away," debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard charts, which was a pretty big deal then. Now bands such as Iron & Wine, Death Cab for Cutie and the Decemberists — all of them so bland you can't even say their names without yawning — regularly take residence at the top of the charts. The Shins have sat on the sidelines for much of this Boring Resurgence; the new "Port of Morrow" is the band's return after five years off. The verdict? They've still got it — "it" being the ability to write sublimely crafted, supremely listenable and ultimately pleasing rock songs that don't move the dial in the slightest.

"They" is actually "he." Frontman James Mercer has dispatched

Backstory

Passion Project

Despite hiring an entirely new backing band for "Port of Morrow," Shins leader James Mercer says it's not quite a solo record. "This thing is something I started in my bedroom as a recording project, and to an extent it has always been that way," he recently told the New York Times. "Its true nature is about the recordings. It's about me having my aesthetic vision realized however possible and then figuring out how to take that vision on the road." (EXPRESS)

every other original band member from this outing. It might not be the most tactful move, but whatever minimal personality the Shins have had, it's always been his.

The bossa nova-flavored "Bait and Switch" swings convincingly, and "Simple Song" both lives up to its self-effacing name and packs a prog-rock punch. It's the rare Shins song that results in an



The Shins
Port of Morrow

increased heart rate. Mostly, though, "Morrow" is the aural equivalent of watching a '70s sitcom on high-definition TV. You can only put so much polish on songs this studied and sedate.

But there is something oddly admirable in Mercer's complete devotion to driving 55 mph in music's far-right lane, in reasserting and not reinventing.

Mercer's lyrics are another area in which he distinguishes himself by barely distinguishing himself — he's neither oblique enough to be mysterious, nor confessional enough to be emotionally resonant. "Is it all so very simple / And horribly complex," he sings on "40 Mark Strasse," and that may as well be Mercer's motto. He's discovered the perfect science to writing an unexciting song. And it may be boring, but boring never sounded this good.

DAVID MALITZ (THE WASHINGTON POST)

● **Merriweather Post Pavilion, 10475 Little Patuxent Pkwy., Columbia, Md.;** Sweetlife Music and Food Festival; April 28, 12 p.m., \$75 - \$125; 410-715-5550, Merriweathermusic.com.



good to know » Aziz Ansari's latest stand-up special, "Dangerously Delicious," which was filmed in Washington last June, is available to download on his website for \$5. » Disney's "John Carter" is officially a flop: The company expects to lose \$200 million on the big-budget film. » Neil Young & Crazy Horse will release "Americana" on June 5, the group's first album together since 2003. (EXPRESS)

lookout entertainment



Mixed Media Mellowed Future

Maybe the members of the outré L.A. rap collective Odd Future have mellowed just a bit, or maybe slurs and violent imagery inevitably lose effect over time, but "The Of Tape Vol. 2," the crew's latest collection, isn't quite as shocking as 2008's "The Odd Future Tape," or the works that have come in between. Fans of the crew's sickest lyrics shouldn't worry: Listening to the group is still like swimming through the mind of a hormonal teenager playing a Rated-M video game in the back of AP English class, especially when ringleader Tyler, the Creator has the reins.

Tracks such as "Real B----," "We Got B----es" and "NY (Ned Flander)," which includes a line about Jerry Sandusky and the pope hitting the club together, are the sort of awkward, twisted pieces that propelled Odd Future from obscurity. But that material, the group's harshest critics may be surprised to learn, is balanced by a lot of simply gorgeous music. SARAH GODFREY

On a New Groove

Esperanza Spalding lets her pop instincts move to the forefront

Album Review

Before Esperanza Spalding triumphed at the Grammys last year, winning Best New Artist honors while throwing fans of fellow contender Justin Bieber into a deep funk, she made the Washington rounds in style, appearing at the Kennedy Center, the Lincoln Theater and the White House. Good gigs. The bassist-vocalist-composer also performed at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in 2009, at the invitation of President Obama, and at the Oscars last month.

"Radio Music Society," her new concept album, indicates that Spalding won't be suffering a career reversal anytime soon. Young, gifted and backed by an impressive array of pop, jazz and hip-hop talent, as well as some of her mentors, the 27-year-old native of Portland, Ore., has created her most enticing, personal and thematically diverse collection yet, a welcome companion to 2010's

"Chamber Music Society."

Don't bother looking for anything strikingly original. Spalding is a synthesist, not a ground-breaker. But from the outset, "Radio Music Society" reveals her pop instincts, jazz sensibilities and social awareness with ingenuity. "Radio Song," a summery ode to rush-hour relief ("This song will keep you groovin', keep traffic movin'") is the opener. It's a simple, lighthearted lyric wed

Ironically, some songs that stand out on 'Radio Music Society' aren't apt to snare broad airplay.

to a sophisticated arrangement that borrows freely from a variety of jazz, pop and Latin traditions. It's also the first of several reminders of how Spalding, like the jazz-savvy Joni Mitchell before her, is capable of creating radio songs that have some musical heft.

"Black Gold," the album's first single, is bound to win Spalding a lot



Esperanza Spalding offers a sonic palate that varies widely on "Radio Music Society."



Esperanza Spalding
Radio Music Society

of new fans. In addition to offering words of encouragement to African American boys ("Hold your head as high as you can/High enough to see who you are, little man"), it boasts

a bright and vibrant chorus.

Ironically, some songs that stand out on "Radio Music Society" aren't apt to snare broad airplay. "Land of the Free" is inspired by the plight of Cornelius Dupree Jr., who served 30 years in prison after being falsely accused of murder. It's a stirring interlude from one of jazz's most-acclaimed young voices.

MIKE JOYCE (THE WASHINGTON POST)

Today's Top Stops

COMPILED BY FIONA ZUBLIN



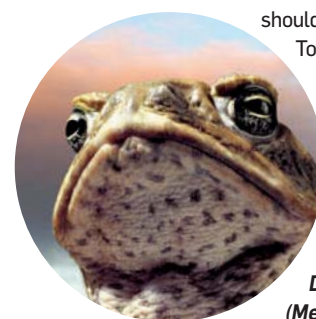
1 An Apple a Day

Fiona Apple dropped her first record in 1996, when she was just 19. It was the boom time of women with giant voices and emotions armed with pianos. Fans have been waiting for a new album since 2005's "Extraordinary Machine" and now "The Idler Wheel..." its full title clocking in at 23 words, is due this spring. **Sixth and I Historic Synagogue, 600 I St. NW; tonight's show has been postponed until March 28, tickets will be honored on the new date; sold out; 202-408-3100, Sixthandi.org. (Gallery Place)**

2 2:46 Again

Did you know Pepco curated an art gallery? It must be so tempting to call every exhibit "electrifying." Its current show is "2:46 and Thereafter," a collection of responses to the March 2011 earthquake from young Japanese artists. 2:46 signifies the exact moment the earthquake began. **Pepco Edison Place Art Gallery, 701 9th St. NW; through Sunday, free; 202-872-3396, Pepco.com. (Gallery Place)**

3 Surrender. Ribbit.



While Australia isn't technically known as the "land of animals that want to kill you," it probably should be. That's the subject of "Cane Toads: The Conquest," showing tonight as part of the D.C. Environmental Film Festival. It's about ravenous toads and the dangers of invasive species. **Landmark E Street Cinema, 555 11th St. NW; 6 p.m.; \$7.50; 202-452-7672, Dcenvironmentalfilmfest.org. (Metro Center)**

FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES

TV tonight **lookout**

Best Bets

CW
8:00



One Tree Hill Dan's (Paul Johansson) life hangs in the balance as the search for Nathan (James Lafferty) becomes more dangerous. Brooke (Sophia Bush, left) is surprised by the return of her father (Richard Burgi). Clay and Quinn reconnect with Logan.

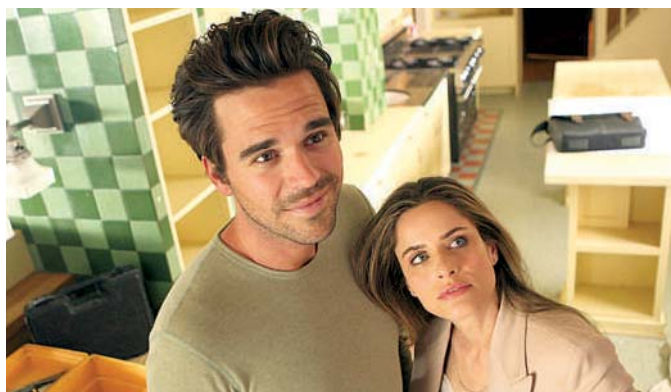
8:30
8:00

Suburgatory George wins a trip to Atlantic City and invites Noah, Fred, Tom and Alex to join him for a guys getaway. While there, they run into Steven Royce, who's playing hooky from a trip to Singapore, and try to help Fred conquer his gambling problem.

USA
10:00



Psych Jaleel White (left, with Mekhi Phifer) guests as a member of Gus' a cappella singing group from college, which helps Gus and Shawn investigate a shooting. The victim is the founder of Right Now, a group for at-risk youth. (TRIBUNE MEDIA)



VIVIAN ZINK/NBC

Life As We Know It

BENT

NBC
9:00

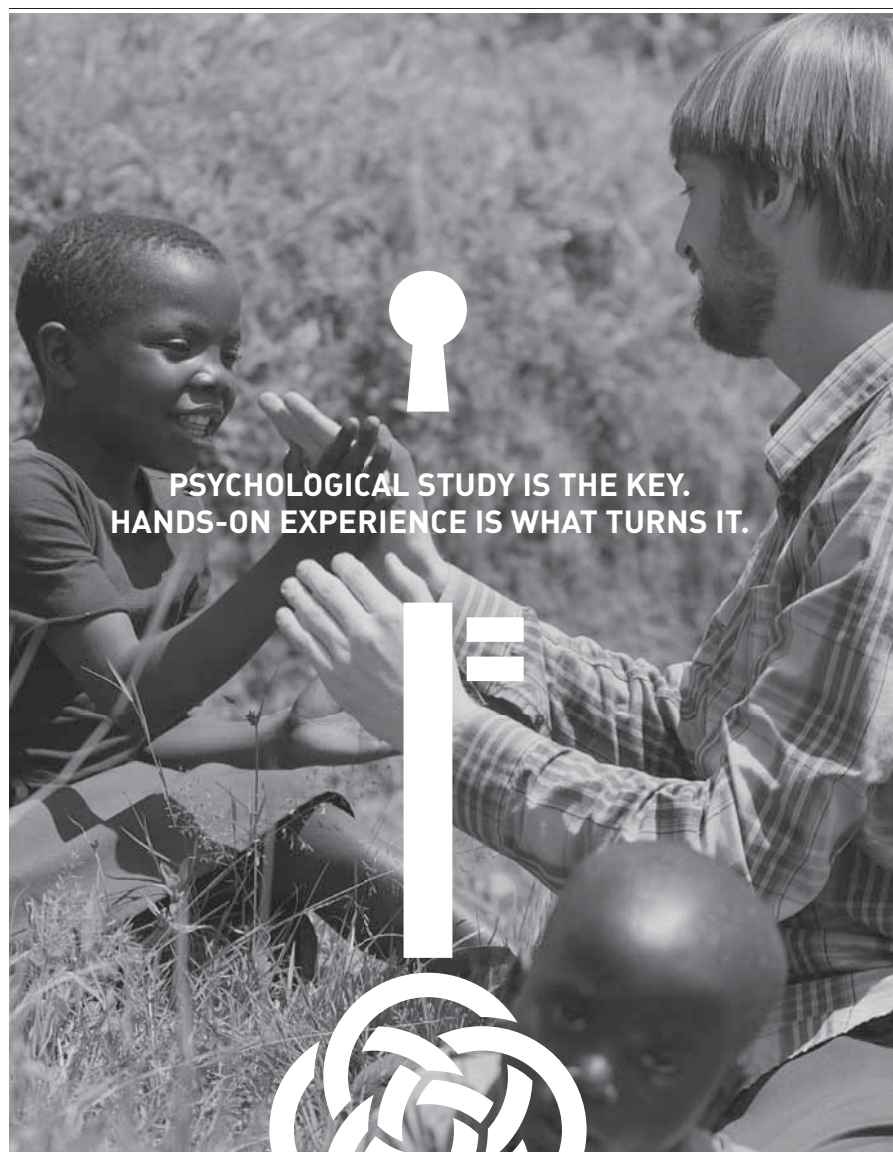
This new sitcom stars Amanda Peet, right, and David Walton, left, as single mom Alex and hunky contractor Pete, who's been hired to redo her kitchen. Alex is a tough-as-nails lawyer, while Pete is a recovering gambler with active addictions to surfing and womanizing. They're an unlikely pair, but the sparks are undeniable. (TM)

Reality



Quacky Family

"Duck Dynasty" (10 p.m., A&E) follows the Robertson family (led by patriarch Phil, above), a rags-to-riches clan who made their fortune fabricating top-of-the-line duck calls. They also own and operate a Louisiana sporting goods empire called Duck Commander. (TM)



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lookout travel

The Better Offer

On booking website BackBid, hotels fight for your reservation

Advice

A few days before Eric Kimmel flew from Montreal to San Francisco, he checked to see whether he could find a better deal on a hotel.

Kimmel logged onto Backbid.com, and within hours of his telling it about his confirmed reservation at the St. Regis, where a standard room starts at \$579 a night, seven

competing hotels had contacted him with lower prices.

One of them, the Omni San Francisco, offered a \$120 savings and was closer to his meeting. "It was right where I needed to be," says Kimmel. "I called the St. Regis to cancel my original reservation."

Almost since the beginning of the commercial Internet — at least as far back as 1998, when Priceline.com launched — consumers have been bidding on travel. That model frequently benefited the travel industry, because customers didn't know how much to pay and often overbid for their rooms, rental cars and tickets. But now, BackBid,



ISTOCKPHOTO/EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

a Canadian start-up, is flipping that idea on its head by asking hotels to bid for your business.

"It's empowering the consumer to say, 'This is what I'm looking for,' and the hotel to say, 'This is what we can offer,'" says Chris Patridge, BackBid's executive vice president of marketing and the company's co-founder.

BackBid takes advantage of the hotel industry's generous refund policies. Guests register with BackBid, adding their reservation and lodging preferences.

Hotels may then submit bids to encourage travelers to "abandon" their current reservation — the company's word, not mine — and book with their property instead. The new reservation is nonrefund-

able and can't be changed, and your card is charged immediately.

As you might expect, there are cheerleaders and critics. Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, which owns the St. Regis, would not comment on losing a customer. Jason Freed, the news editor for the industry website HotelNews-Now.com, called BackBid's strategy "a bit scandalous."

"What if every time you bought an item from the grocery store, an article of clothing or a piece of furniture, once you got home you had competing stores offering to sell you the same item for a cheaper price?" he asked.



Christopher Elliot writes The Navigator column for The Washington Post.

TRAVEL TIPS

Flight Crew

I'd like to take our family of four to Tuscany in the fall. Airfare now is around \$1,300 per person. Is that the best I can expect?

It is expensive to fly to Italy from the Washington area. It may go lower than \$1,200, especially this fall, and if you multiply even \$100 savings per ticket by four, it adds up. But you can save by flying out of New York and into Rome on connecting flights — I'm seeing fares of less than \$800 round trip.

We will be in Vegas for two nights with two older kids in early June. Is the new Mob Museum appropriate for them?

I would chose a themed hotel, such as Treasure Island, Luxor or New York New York. There are many non-gambling sights. For example: the lion habitat at MGM, a gondola ride at Venetian, the roller coaster at New York New York, the dolphin habitat at Mirage, and, yes, the Mob Museum.

I'm planning a week's family vacation and thinking about Quebec City. Are there other cities or attractions that "must-see"?

Oh, you're going to love it. Nearby you should check out Montmorency Falls and the Ile d'Orleans. Also look into Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré.

The Washington Post's Flight Crew fields travel-related questions, comments, gripes and stories at 2 p.m. every Monday at washingtonpost.com/travel.

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\$25 Application Fee

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Blog Log



“Great mysteries have the ability to captivate people to the point of obsession. The Bermuda Triangle, the Loch Ness Monster, Bigfoot are a few famous ones. In the United States, no one mystery will ever be greater than Amelia Earhart’s disappearance in her famous 1937 trip around the world.”

—RICHARD STALKER AT

WEBPRONWS.COM reacts to reports that U.S. government officials and a private historical group are expected to announce a new effort to locate the famed aviator’s twin-engine Lockheed in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, where Earhart may have died.

“With lines like, ‘Read so hard librarians tryin’ to FINE me, they can’t identify me, checked in with a pseudonym, so I guess you can say I’m Mark Twaining,’ we’re hoping that these ladies make a follow-up.”

—ZOE TRISKA AT HUFFINGTONPOST.COM

is looking forward to a possible sequel to “Bitches in Bookshops,” performed by Annabelle Quezada and La Shea Delaney, which is a parody of the Jay-Z and Kanye West song “Paris.”

“Today, I will BranchOut & get LinkedIn. Or perhaps I will trust my luck to StumbleUpon all those Tumblring with their Face in a Book #social”

—@THE_FRANCHISE pokes fun at the career networking site BranchOut, which apparently is making a new push on Facebook, as well as other networking sites that have cropped up across the social media landscape.

“In case you had any doubts about “Mad Men’s” impact on pop culture, look no further than the cover of the March 26 issue of Newsweek, which not only features Don Draper & Co. but is itself totally restyled to retro 1965 glory.”

—LIZ KELLY NELSON AT BLOG.

ZAP2IT.COM breaks down the collaborative effort of the AMC show and the magazine, ahead of the “Mad Men” Season 5 premiere on March 25.

“As a dad, I am personally offended by conservatives wanting to make sure everyone knows where Malia Obama is in Mexico.”

—@EWERICKSON, editor-in-chief of the conservative blog RedState.com, tweets his thoughts following news of an earthquake in Mexico, where the president’s daughter is on a class trip.

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puzzles lookout

Horoscope

ARIES (March 21-April 19) You are likely to come up with an idea that surprises those around you, and only a precious few are willing to give it a try at first.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Your judgment may not be completely sound when it comes to someone with whom you may have had a romantic attachment.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) It's time to start putting your plans into action today. You mustn't let someone stop you merely with a few words which mean little or nothing.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) You may actually be encouraging the very behavior in another that you do not like or appreciate. It's time to change your approach.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) You can find a bargain or two today, but you must still guard against overspending.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Today you are likely to realize that it's time to take advantage of certain circumstances that affect you in a peripheral manner.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) There's no reason to think someone else has the goods on you -- though what he or she does actually know could be rather startling.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) You must be willing to let someone close to you take the reins today. You mustn't try to control everyone.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You'll realize that you know more than you thought -- but less than you should -- about something that is coming to the fore.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You know how to play according to another's rules, but that doesn't mean you should do it. He or she is asking for too much.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You'll come to a better understanding of a situation that you have been studying for some time -- thanks to a friend's timely misstep.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) What you're after today couldn't possibly come to you without more of a fight -- or a very long journey. You can't expect it to come easily.

Scrabble Grams

PAR SCORE 140-150, BEST SCORE 204

E ₁	E ₁	I ₁	R ₁	R ₁	L ₁	P ₃

--

 RACK 1

A ₁	E ₁	E ₁	O ₁	S ₁	S ₁	W ₄

--

 RACK 2

E ₁	E ₁	O ₁	V ₄	N ₁	P ₃	L ₁

Double Word Score

--

 RACK 3

A ₁	A ₁	I ₁	R ₁	T ₁	N ₁	W ₄

1st Letter Triple

--

 RACK 4

Yesterday's Solution

B ₃	R ₁	A ₁	M ₃	B ₃	L ₁	E ₁
Q ₁₀	U ₁	I ₁	E ₁	T ₁	E ₁	N ₁
A ₁	U ₁	R ₁	O ₁	R ₁	A ₁	L ₁
A ₁	V ₄	E ₁	N ₁	U ₁	E ₁	

 PAR SCORE 150-160

 RACK 1 = 63
 RACK 2 = 82
 RACK 3 = 57
 RACK 4 = 17
 TOTAL 219

FOUR RACK TOTAL

Make a 2-7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get a 50-point bonus. Blank tiles used as any letter have no point value. Scrabble is a trademark of Hasbro in the U.S. and Canada.

Sudoku

MEDIUM

2				7	8			4
	4			2	9			6
9			4				2	
5					3	9		
7	8			9			3	5
		3	2					1
	5				2			7
3				5	1		8	
8				9	4			2

Yesterday's Solution

3	7	1	6	9	5	2	4	8
6	9	4	2	3	8	1	7	5
8	2	5	7	1	4	6	3	9
1	5	2	9	8	3	4	6	7
4	8	9	1	6	7	3	5	2
7	6	3	5	4	2	8	9	1
2	1	7	3	5	6	9	8	4
5	3	8	4	2	9	7	1	6
9	4	6	8	7	1	5	2	3

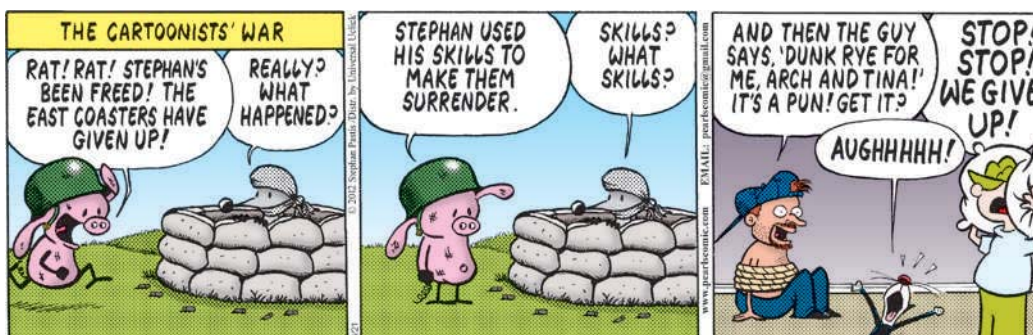
Need more Sudoku? Find another puzzle in the Comics section of the Post every Sunday and in the Style section Monday through Saturday.

Comics

POOCH CAFE | PAUL GILLIGAN



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE | STEPHAN PASTIS



Forecast

74 | 58

Today: Fog in the morning; otherwise, clearing today. Partly cloudy tonight.

77 | 58

Tomorrow: Fog tomorrow morning; partly sunny. Mainly clear tomorrow night.

Looking Ahead

FRI **SAT** **SUN**
83 | 56 | 70 | 50 | 64 | 46

Sun and Moon

Sunrise today: 7:10 a.m.
 Sunset today: 7:21 p.m.
 Moonrise today: 6:20 a.m.
 Moonset today: 6:47 p.m.

Almanac

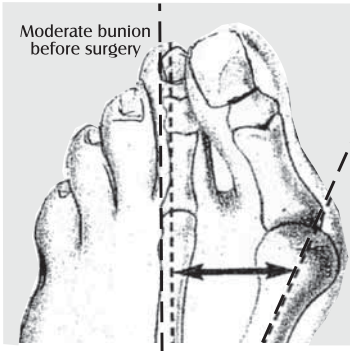
Normal high: 57
 Record high: 83
 Normal low: 39
 Record low: 12

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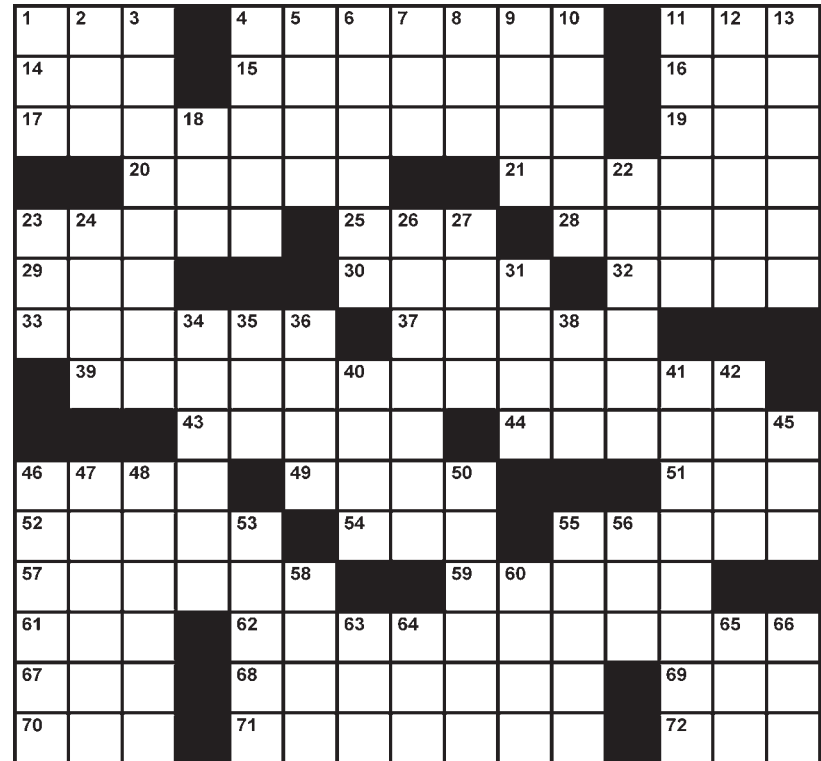
TAKE YOUR TIME

ACROSS

- Deep sleep state
- Court awards
- "Boom-bah" lead-in
- "What ____ supposed to think?"
- Steep part of a glacier
- Explosive trio of letters
- Ultimate moment of truth
- Santa ____ winds
- Extremely light wood
- "The drink of the gods"
- Ahead of schedule
- Accountant, briefly
- Bus driver's circuit
- Alternative to JVC or Panasonic, once
- Adult elvers
- Bee ____ ("Stayin' Alive" group)
- To feel sorrow
- Give someone a shake, say
- Pressure time for many salespeople
- "Violet" or "sound" introduction
- Slithering squeezer
- Campus marchers (Abbr.)
- Drinks daintily
- "____ I saw Elba"
- April Fools' Day sign
- Tire inflation meas.
- "Custer's Last ____"
- Straight shooting, so to speak
- "Billboard" feature
- Type or kind
- Period immediately before Easter
- "The Sum of ____ Fears"
- "M*A*S*H" corporal
- Is for a few?
- Strong sodium solution
- Words before "wear" or "serve"
- Provide staff for

DOWN

- The Brits in colonial India
- Aussie bird that can't fly
- Cerebrum's neighbor



EDITED BY TIMOTHY E. PARKER

- How haunted houses are lit
- Prized blackjack cards
- Dennis of the comics, for one
- Away from the bow
- ____ about (roam)
- Dash and splash
- More crafty
- Pigeon's park perch
- Evident since birth
- Fixed gazes
- Word with "Friday" or "pal"
- Compelling, as an argument
- Work measurement unit
- Farmland unit
- "Could be"
- Lotion ingredient
- Drainage pump

- Brought forth
- TV control (Abbr.)
- Baby newts
- Chop suey sauce
- Business undertaking
- '80s TV adventure series
- Unicorn feature, e.g.
- William in "Body Heat"
- Kind of equality
- Aloud
- Bell sound
- Catania locale
- Profoundly deep sleep
- Big name in electronic products
- Credit reporting co. now known as Experian
- Far from well done
- "Remington Steele" character Laura

- ____ of Tranquility
- A famous Caesar
- Important time in history
- "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" author Kesey

Yesterday's Solution



Today in History

1685 Composer Johann Sebastian Bach is born in Eisenach, Germany.

1962 The first Taco Bell restaurant is opened by Glen Bell in Downey, Calif.

1963 The Alcatraz federal prison island in San Francisco Bay is emptied of its last inmates at the order of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

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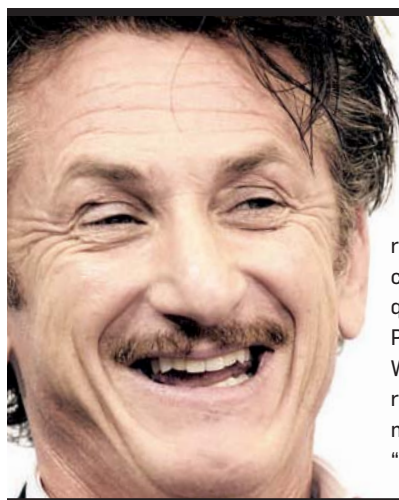


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people **lookout****HONORS****Sean Penn One Less Degree of Separation From Nobel Prize**

Sean Penn is being honored by a group of Nobel laureates for his relief work in Haiti following the country's January 2010 earthquake. Penn is to receive the 2012 Peace Summit Award at the 12th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates. The actor issued a statement Monday calling the award an "extraordinary honor." (AP)

TITLES**We Call Her the Former Mrs. Not-Denise-Richards Mueller-Sheen, for Short**

Charlie Sheen's ex-wife, Brooke Mueller, has pleaded guilty to a reduced cocaine drug charge under a deferred judgment that means her record will remain clean after she serves a year of probation. Charges stemmed from Mueller's arrest Dec. 3, 2011, after a woman reported being assaulted at a nightclub. (AP)



The former Kate Middleton, Duchess of Cambridge, has nothing on Brooke.

Heresies**Mutant Turtles To Hatch From Exploding Cars**

Michael Bay said in a statement Tuesday that Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles fans should disregard rumors his prequel will depict the turtles as aliens, not mutants: "Take a breath, and chill. Our team is working closely with one of the original creators of Ninja Turtles to ... give a more complex backstory." (EXPRESS)



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CALL NOW!**Lonely? Confused? Want to Feel More So?**

Former Real Housewife of New Jersey Danielle Staub, top right, is Dial-A-Star.com's top earner, TMZ.com reports. The service, which launched last week, is "blowing up," says TMZ. Fans who want to chat with Staub must cough up \$18 a minute. Nadya "Octomom" Suleman, lower right, costs \$12/minute; Michael Lohan, upper left, is a bargain at \$10/minute. Dina Lohan, lower left, is the priciest — \$25/minute! Tila Tequila and others are also standing by. (EXPRESS)

**HEROES****It Takes a Brave Man to Ride in a Glorified Airplane**

The 500th customer to purchase a ride on Virgin Galactic's SpaceShip-Two is Ashton Kutcher, according to Richard Branson's blog. "I gave Ashton a quick call to congratulate and welcome him," Branson wrote. Branson also called Kutcher a "true pioneer" who, along with other true pioneers, has earned "a place in the history books." (EXPRESS)

"Apparently I have a lot of amniotic fluid, so whenever my water breaks it will be like a fire hydrant!"



— JESSICA SIMPSON CONTINUES TO SPEAK COLORFULLY ABOUT HER PREGNANCY, THIS TIME ON "JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE!" ON MONDAY. SHE SAYS SHE'S DUE IN ABOUT FOUR WEEKS.

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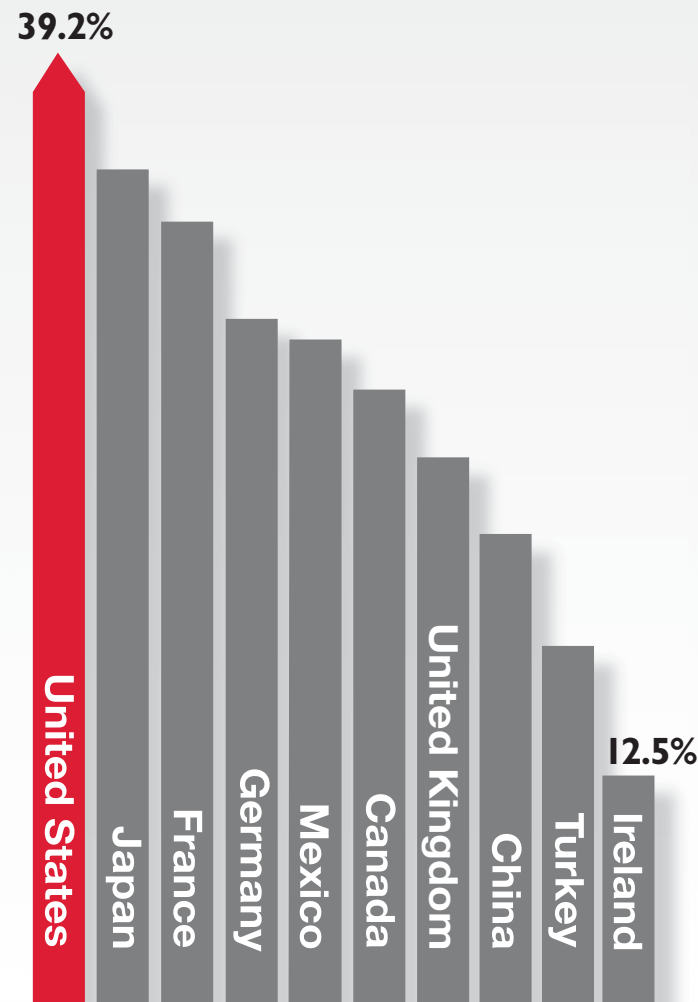
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THE MARCH TOWARD MADNESS

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In 1986, the U.S. slashed its corporate tax rates in order to be more competitive. Since then, other countries have followed suit – leaving us behind. Higher tax rates make American companies less competitive, discourage foreign investment in the U.S. and stifle job growth.

Business Roundtable's **Taking Action for America** is a plan to increase economic growth and job creation.

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